

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 SEOUL 02209 01 OF 02 180823Z

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EB-08

OMB-01 TRSE-00 OES-06 AID-05 /075 W

-----180854Z 103969 /17

R 180736Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2726

INFO USDOC WASHDC

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 SEOUL 2209

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BENC PINT ETRD KS

SUBJ: RELOCATION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE CAPITAL

REF: SEOUL 1209

1. PRESIDENT PAK'S FIRST PUBLIC EXPRESSION ON FEBRUARY 10 OF HIS DESIRE THAT, AS ONE OF THE MEASURES TO RELIEVE THE HEAVY POPULATION PRESSURE ON SEOUL, A "TEMPORARY ADMINISTRATIVE CAPITAL" SHOULD BE CONSTRUCTED "AT A PLACE ABOUT ONE HOUR'S DRIVE TO THE SOUTH" TOOK THE COUNTRY BY SURPRISE AND HAS BECOME A MAJOR TOPIC OF NATIONAL INTEREST AND MEDIA SPECULATION. IN A SUBSEQUENT MONTHLY ECONOMIC BRIEFING ON MARCH 8, THE FIRST MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO, CHANG KYONG-SUN, REPORTED BRIEFLY ON MEASURES WHICH ARE TO BE TAKEN TO DISPERSE POPULATION, SCHOOLS AND INDUSTRIES FROM THE CITY TO LESS CROWDED AREAS SUCH AS YUNGDONG AND THE NEW BANWOL INDUSTRIAL CITY JUST SOUTH OF SEOUL. WE UNDERSTAND THAT HE ALLUDED TO THE REMOVAL OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE CAPITAL. THE PRESIDENT REPORTEDLY REQUESTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT REFRAIN FROM COMMENT ON THAT SUBJECT UNTIL A GENERAL PLAN COULD BE PREPARED AND REPORTEDLY NOTED THAT IT WOULD TAKE "TWO OR THREE

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PAGE 02 SEOUL 02209 01 OF 02 180823Z

YEARS" TO DEVELOP SUCH A PLAN.

2. ON THE BASIS OF EMBASSY INQUIRIES THROUGHOUT THE ROKG, IT APPEARS THAT NO RESEARCH OR PLANNING ASSIGNMENTS HAVE BEEN GIVEN TO PERSONNEL IN THE SEVERAL MINISTRIES WHICH WOULD HAVE KEY RESPONSIBILITY IN SUCH A MOVE. (WE HAVE LEARNED, HOWEVER, THAT KOREA INSTI-

TUTE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND KOREA DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE, AN ECONOMIC THINK TANK WITH CLOSE GOVERNMENT TIES, HAVE BEEN INFORMALLY ASKED TO BEGIN THINKING ABOUT SOME OF THE BROADER ISSUES INVOLVED) IT MAY REASONABLY BE ASSUMED THAT NO MINISTERIAL ACTIVITY CAN BEGIN UNTIL THE PLANNING OFFICE OF THE HEAVY AND CHEMICAL INDUSTRY PROMOTION COUNCIL UNDER THE DIRECTION OF MR. O WON-CHOL, SECOND SENIOR SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC AFFAIRS (BLUE HOUSE), HAS HEARD FROM KIST AND KDI, PERHAPS INVESTIGATED THE EXPERIENCE OF URBAN PLANNERS FOR SUCH CITIES AS BONN, CANBERRA, AND BRASILIA, AND SET OUT THE GENERAL PARAMETERS THAT SUCH AN UNDERTAKING WOULD INVOLVE.

3. EMBASSY COMMENT: IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO ENVISION A READY SOURCE OF CAPITAL FOR SUCH A PROJECT WHICH WOULD NOT IMPUGN ROK DEFENSE OR DEVELOPMENT PLANNING DURING THE 1977-81 FOURTH PLAN. THUS, WE UNDERSTAND THAT DPM NAM DUCK-WOO TOLD THE PRESIDENT THAT GROWING MILITARY EXPENDITURE AND INVESTMENT FOR THE FOURTH FIVE YEAR PLAN PRECLUDED STARTING CONSTRUCTION OF THE NEW CAPITAL BEFORE 1981. THEREFORE, ALTHOUGH THE PRESIDENT'S PROPOSAL WILL GO FORWARD, CONCRETE PLANNING MAY NOT BE POSSIBLE BEFORE THE FIFTH PLAN PERIOD, WITH NO ACTUAL COMMENCEMENT OF CONSTRUCTION BEFORE 1982. NO LOCATION HAS BEEN PUBLICLY OFFERED, BUT KOREA SHIPBUILDING AND ENGINEERING COMPANY CHAIRMAN NAMKOONG RYUN SUGGESTED TO EMBOFF THAT SINTANJIN ON THE KUM RIVER WOULD BE HIS CHOICE AS THE IDEAL SITE FOR THE NEW CAPITAL. IT IS A BROAD, FLAT AREA RINGED TO THE NORTH BY A HIGH "ROCKET PROOF" MOUNTAIN BARRIER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 SEOUL 02209 01 OF 02 180823Z

ENCLOSED BY A BEND IN A MAJOR RIVER AND SERVED BY THE EXISTING TRANSPORTATION NETWORK. MR. NAMKOONG'S VIEWS ARE USUALLY FARREACHING AND HE DOES NOT HAVE ANY PERSONAL INTEREST IN THE AREA'S REAL ESTATE.

4. WE HAVE HEARD FROM KDI PRESIDENT KIM MAHN JAE THAT THE IDEA OF A NEW CAPITAL WAS FLOATED BY THE PRESIDENT AT LEAST THREE YEARS AGO AND THAT KDI HAD BEEN ASKED TO LOOK AT THE TRANSPORT PROBLEM. KDI HAD OPTED FOR A "BULLET TRAIN" (HIGH SPEED TRACKED SYSTEM) TO CONNECT THE NEW CENTER WITH SEOUL AND HAD ALSO ADVISED THE PRESIDENT THAT A TOTALLY NEW CITY WOULD BE VERY EXPENSIVE BUT THAT BUILDING ON AN EXISTING SMALLER CITY WITH EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE WOULD SAVE A LOT. HE IDENTIFIED THE CITY OF TAEJON (ABOUT TEN KILOMETERS SOUTH OF SINTANJIN AND NEXT TO THE ROKG'S LARGE NEW SCIENCE CITY) AS THE STRONGEST CANDIDATE. IF IT IS DECIDED TO BUILD ON TO AN EXISTING CITY, WORK MIGHT BEGIN IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS, USING FUNDS THAT

OTHERWISE WOULD HAVE BEEN INVESTED IN SEOUL.

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PAGE 01 SEOUL 02209 02 OF 02 180851Z

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 2 OF 2 SEOUL 2209

5. ACCORDING TO ALL SOURCES A MIXTURE OF MOTIVES ENGENDERED THE PROPOSAL. SEOUL ITSELF HAS GROWN SO FAST THAT IT IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY UNPLEASANT AND UNHEALTHY AND WILL BE TERRIBLY EXPENSIVE TO RECTIFY. SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS-- SEOUL IS LOCATED 25 MILES FROM THE NORTH-- WHICH HAVE ALREADY LED THE ROKG TO PRESSURE INDUSTRY TO LOCATE ELSEWHERE, CONDITIONS EVEN MORE IMPORTANTLY THE SURVIVAL OF GOVERNMENT. FINALLY, PRESIDENT PARK HIMSELF CAN HARDLY BE UNMINDFUL THAT THE NEW CAPITAL WILL BEAR HIS STAMP, AND IN ANY CASE IS EXPECTED TO PLAY A PERSONAL ROLE IN PLANNING.

6. ALONG WITH THE OPEN QUESTIONS CITED ABOVE, THE QUESTION OF HOW MUCH OF THE ROKG'S EXECUTIVE BRANCH WILL MOVE REMAINS OPEN. FOR EXAMPLE, THE EMBASSIES HAVE BEEN TOLD INFORMALLY THAT THEY CAN EXPECT TO REMAIN IN SEOUL, BUT THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS MAY MOVE. THE PRESIDENT IS EXPECTED TO RETAIN BASES IN BOTH CAPITALS AND TO SHUTTLE BACK AND FORTH.

7. EMBASSY WILL FOLLOW THIS PROJECT AND PROVIDE ALERT ECON/COMMERCIAL REPORTING AS ITS ELEMENTS TAKE SHAPE OVER THE YEARS AHEAD. AT THIS STAGE IT WOULD APPEAR TO BE IMPRACTICAL FOR US FIRMS TO ATTEMPT DIRECT CONTACT ON

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PAGE 02 SEOUL 02209 02 OF 02 180851Z

THIS PROJECT. HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE THAT SHOULD INTERESTED  
US AGENCIES BE ABLE TO PROVIDE SELECTED MATERIALS WHICH  
WOULD DISPLAY THE OVERALL SUPERIOR CAPABILITY OF US  
URBAN PLANNING INSTITUTIONS, WE COULD USEFULLY FORWARD  
THEM TO MR. O AND THE PLANNING OFFICE FOR MAXIMUM EFFECT  
DURING THIS EARLY FORMATIVE PERIOD IN THEIR THINKING.

8. ACTION REQUESTED: THAT DEPARTMENT SELECT LIMITED  
QUANTITY OF HIGH QUALITY INFORMATION ON US URBAN  
PLANNING CAPABILITIES FOR PRESENTATION TO THE APPROPRIATE  
KOREAN OFFICIALS.  
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